

Memoirs of Himself.

whole moral being should have been kept continually disclosed to his view, he is better qualified perhaps to describe the intrigues of a foreign court, or the progress of a foreign trade; to depict the manners of the Italians, or the Turks : to narrate the proceedings of the Jesuits, or the adventures of the gipsies ; than to write the history of his own mind.

If we had practised habitual self-observation, we could not have failed to be made aware of much that it had been well for us to know. There have been thousands of feelings, each of which, if strongly seized upon, and made the subject of reflection, would have shown us what our character was, and what it was likely to become. There have been numerous incidents, which operated on us as tests, and so fully brought out our prevailing quality, that another person, who should have been discriminatively observing us, would speedily have formed a decided estimate. But unfortunately the mind is generally too much occupied by the feeling or the incident itself, to have the slightest care or consciousness that anything *could* be learnt, or *is* disclosed. In very early youth it is almost inevitable for it to be thus lost to itself even amidst its own feelings, and the external objects of attention; but it seems a contemptible thing, and certainly is a criminal and dangerous thing, for a man in mature life to allow himself this thoughtless escape from self-examination.

We have not only neglected to observe what our feelings indicated, but have also in a very great degree ceased to remember what they were. We may wonder how we could pass away successively from so many scenes and conjunc-tures, each in its time of no trifling moment in our apprehension, and retain so light an impression that we have now nothing distinctly to tell about what o^{nce} excited our utmost emotion. As to my own mind, I perceive that it is becoming uncertain of the exact nature of many feelings of consider- able interest, even of comparatively recent date; and that the remembrance of what was felt in very early life has nearly faded away. I have just been observing several children of eight or ten years old, in all the active vivacity which enjoys the plenitude of the moment without "looking before or after;" and while observing, I attempted, but without success, to recollect what I was at that age. I can indeed remember the principal events of the period, and the actions